

## Pub is the Hub Case Study

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### The White Lion, Lower Ufford, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 6DW



The White Lion is the only pub in Lower Ufford, a small hamlet with a population of 500 people and a vibrant mixed age community, approximately 4 miles from Woodbridge, Suffolk. The strong community was the main driver for Stephen and Gaynor Thurlow when they purchased the freehold of the White Lion in 2003, and they immediately started to involve the community in the development of the pub.

The White Lion is one of the smallest pubs in Suffolk and consequently has a very limited bar and dining area. It is, however, located on a large site with plenty of outdoor areas for community events and activities. With this in mind, Stephen and Gaynor immediately set about including the community in various activities and functions that go on throughout the year: classic car rallies, beer festivals, fine dining evenings, a sailing club, table tennis tournaments, and Bonkers Bingo! Alongside these activities they also developed their own smallholding with pigs, chickens and beehives, while growing their own vegetables, and all this produce was used in the pub.

There had previously been a community shop in Lower Ufford, which had closed through lack of support, but Stephen and Gaynor felt that linking the shop and pub together would work. With their business experience and enthusiasm, they put together a plan and discussed the idea with the Parish Council, which gave them whole hearted support and in turn helped them to access a small amount of capital funding from the Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme. The project involved converting part of an adjacent barn into a shop, and the first obstacle was that the building was in need of extensive repairs before any work on the project could start. At an estimated cost of £10,000 they went ahead and got their plans passed to renovate the buildings.

After a lot of hard work they opened the new shop on Good Friday 2011 and this has had a positive impact, both on the business and the local community. They now sell their own pork, eggs, pies, honey, vegetables etc. alongside locally sourced produce. As this is the only shop in Lower Ufford, the customers appreciate and support this, not only frequenting the shop but also using the pub on a regular basis, and as a result the project benefits both community and pub.

- A clear vision from an enthusiastic and experienced licensee.
- Working with the local community to clearly identify village needs.
- Gaining the support of the Parish Council.
- Able to successfully apply for a small amount of grant funding from local authorities.

Total project capital costs (£10,000.00)  
Applicant contribution (£5,000.00)  
Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme (£5,000.00)

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